4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

course simply to please their parents; or so that the husband will not be suspected of impotence by his watchful relatives; or so that his parents may not accuse the girl of being barren; or, when one of them does want intercourse, the other does it merely to oblige. Public opinion is an important factor in sexual relations, and it must if possible be satisfied by a pregnancy. If a couple have no children a divorce may be forced upon them after a while, even if neither of them wants that. When a couple have no children outsiders start asking their parents, "What is the matter with them?" Interestingly, loose talk of this sort will be directed towards the childless husband before people — primarily his parents — begin to attach any blame to the girl.

Older couples who have several children continue to engage in coitus either for pleasure or out of habit, I was told. Men may continue into old age, perhaps performing the act no more than once a month; but women tend to lose interest once menopause has set in, and are often not in the best of health by that time. A small minority of widowers decide they have the strength to remarry and provided they are wealthy enough to support another wife may intimate this interest to a male friend of equal age. He will tell the old man's sons and daughters about the idea, and these children will then look around for a new stepmother. This however will only occur after they have tested the old man's capabilities. One test is to have someone observe him when he urinates: it must be noted whether the flow of urine was strong enough to make a slight hole in the mud, which would be taken as an indication of suitable strength. A further test might involve the wife of his younger brother. She would be deputed to catch him somewhere privately where she might suggest particular women for him, or even go so far as to assay his capabilities herself. Such an affair would be impermissible if the old man were related as a "husband's father" to her — albeit a classificatory one. But otherwise, provided the affair were handled with discretion, it would be quite acceptable for her to have relations with a husband's brother. Furthermore "it is quite common for a widow to marry her brother-in-law" ("Miles" 1933: 74). In the past a wealthy old widower might ask a younger man to find him a wife. If successful in this he would probably locate a young but barren woman, who might well complain right away that such an old man could not satisfy her. This dilemma was sometimes overcome when the go-between undertook to satisfy the woman provided she married his older friend.

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

826 It is important that a child should look like a mixture of both
827 parents, even though it is believed to develop solely from the man's
842 semen when in the mother's womb. If it resembles only one of them, that parent will die within a year of the child's birth. The skin should preferably be light in complexion, and relatives will then be very proud of it. If a child is born with grey hair or light-coloured eyes, however, it is felt the family will not like it.

844 Badagas also believe that if a woman's first birth is a daughter,
787 she will have further births. If the seventh birth is a daughter and the eighth a son, then the family will prosper. People also say that if while crawling the infant is seen to peer at its genitals, the next child born to the mother will be of the opposite sex.

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

842 be that way for every thousand women who are. It is not assumed that a women is barren if her first marriage produces no children, however: the couple should divorce and both remarry, in order to have children with other spouses. By this procedure it will be seen whether a person is really infertile. Badagas believe infertility is caused by a [754] curse, or by sin done in one's previous life, or by [783] the sins of one's ancestors. In some villages a childless man would allow his brother to have [837] coitus with his wife in an attempt to gain off- [835] spring.

842 I was unable to identify any definite medicine for infertility. A barren girl was inspected nude by 759 a therapist and told that "she was intended to be a male and would never have childern." (Sometimes the therapist could tell from a girl's face if she were incurable, and told her so.) Nonetheless the female therapist later on (around 1930) made 842 a positive suggestion for curing the barren girl: 759 she should get hold of a small boy just after he 755 had defecated, and while his penis was in a some- 839 what erect state; she should then gently suck on his organ. This was probably a reflection of the idea offered somewhere in the Puranas that the [827] semen of small boys is in vaporous form; later it becomes liquid; and in old age it has become solid. It is highly doubtful, however, whether any Badagas believe a woman can be inseminated through the mouth.

842 This particular therapist did have a medicine for infertility, but apparently died with her secret 757 long before I worked in her villages. She did know of a plant that cured the affliction, and once mentioned to a daughter-in-law that the cure was very difficult and that she had very high standards for its proper performance. In administering the medicine she also told women they should love their husbands to the utmost, for they were usually barren simply because their minds were not

4: Hockings B-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

ideas about how the human body works; and this is by no means easy. Many Badagas have studied biology in college or high school; a few are qualified doctors (M.B.B.S.); others again have butchered dead animals; while yet others can at least claim to have someone in their family who has acquired some knowledge of physiology by one of the above avenues. And popular magazines that Badagas read now contain medical sections concerned with their readers' health. Knowing how pervasive this kind of knowledge has become during the present century, I had to be very careful in my choice of an informant who could explain to me the indigenous Badaga notions of how the body functions. I finally selected a man who believes himself to be about 80 years old (in 1977), who is illiterate and has never attended school, who is a Woḍeya, and hence orthodox, conservative, and vegetarian, who has never butchered an animal, and who practises some medical cures. What he knows of medicine and physiology he learnt from his illiterate father, and to a lesser extent from his mother, early in the century. His village is situated midway between the villages of my other medical informants, and no further than 5 kms from any of them.

After listening to this man for some hours, I realized that ordinary, uneducated peasants like him can have the confidence to become therapists, winning recognition and trust for their craft, because the village Badaga who is their primary client accepts that the workings of the body are a much simpler system than anything we know of in the Western world. Very broadly, such people see human physiology as a single system, with everything centering on the belly. They do not know of the nervous or muscular systems, and their ideas about the circulation of the blood are so rudimentary that do not recognize the role of the heart in this. They conceive of a single organ in the chest, the *nenju*, which is both the heart and the lungs in our terminology, but which is of no particular importance in their scheme of things. Of course they know that the heart beats, but they believe this to be simply the sound of air vibrating in the *nenju* as it passes down to the belly by the process of breathing.

10.13. There are about 16 organs in the body, and nearly all of them are connected somehow with the belly, which is thus responsible for digestion, blood circulation, reproduction, breathing, smell, and even sight and speech.

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Food goes through the mouth into a tube which passes down to a stomach (*alle*) on the right side of the abdomen just above the navel. There is a second *alle* adjoining it, on the left, and here the body stores liquids, which reach it by a separate tube from the mouth. The two *alle* are joined by a third tube called *koḍalu* which "keeps them in balance," because liquid can flow through it to mix with the food or *vice versa*. The real mixing occurs however in the belly (*aḍi hotte*), which lies around and below the navel, and is a large organ. A tube connects the belly with each of the two *alle*. Here blood is prepared from the mixed food, and is sent to all parts of the body through arteries (*narambu*). The actual digestion is carried out with the assistance of a number of worms, about the size of a pencil though fatter in the middle. These worms remain alive in the belly and eat our food there. A man must have at least one big worm there or he will die. It is perhaps because they are living things that they need air. In any event, when breathing is occurring air passes through the two nostrils, the mouth, the eyes and the ears, by a single tube to the *nenju*, and then continues from there to the belly, where the air is needed for digestion. The evidence for all this is found in flatulence, and in cases where a patient's stool contains worms.

An important unit within the belly is the colon (*karu*), a tube about 3 cms in diameter which must remain vertical or else the patient will die. I have already described (6.58) how diarrhoea can result from a displaced colon, and the techniques for getting it back in position.

The head is important for sense, and it is recognized that the brain (*mu:le*) does the thinking. It is not however connected with the eyes, ears, mouth or any other organ. Speech originates in the belly, and the tongue (*na:lange*) helps in talking—its only function. The larynx (*suttage*) however has nothing to do with speech; it is simply the gateway through which tubes carrying air, food and liquid pass into the body.

Muscle (*kenḍa* or *kanḍa*) is merely a swelling where, because a limb has been bent (i.e., "flexing a muscle" in our terminology), some extra blood gets stored up by constriction of the arteries. Similarly a fat stomach is caused by lack of exercise or manual labour, with the result that blood gets stored up in the stomach instead of circulating to the extremities. A fat person is nicknamed *balla hotte* (literally "Big Basket Belly"), and he wants little food

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

827 because the digestion has already produced such a store of blood.
826 There seems to be no conception of layers of fat lying under the skin.

The existence of a skeleton is recognized. Thus the backbone allows us to stand up erect. Outside it there is a large vein, which is necessary for life to continue. Both large and small bones have been given by God, to aid us in working.

[84] Reproduction is conceived of as a somewhat separate subsystem, but it too centres on the belly; and again it is by God's grace that there are two sexes. He has given us hair only in certain parts of the body to differentiate us from animals. Furthermore, he has given moustaches and beards to men and breasts to women, in order to distinguish between the sexes. It is also God's will that only men have semen, and only women have menses. Inside the
826 belly of women, but not of men, there is a bag, the womb (*ku:su*
827 *pae*) where a foetus grows. The foetus is formed entirely from
842 semen, which is why copulation is essential for conception. Blood
843 comes to the child after digestion has occurred in the mother's belly, and the foetus grows with this blood. Without conception this blood becomes waste each mouth. Urine and faeces are simi-
827 larly waste products of the digestion process in the belly.

After birth, milk flows from the belly to the breasts, and is
826 sucked through the nipples (*ma: ru*). These are thought to be the
827 outside part of the *nenju*, and it is by God's grace that only in women do they give milk.

The semen is another product of the belly, and it passes from there to the penis during coitus. The function of the *he:ḍu* (scrotum and testicles) is simply to effect an erection; it is not a source of semen.

Parts of the body present from birth do not grow continuously, but hair, being like grass, does. Nevertheless a child does grow slowly if it is fed properly, just as vegetables do if they are manured. If one's *nenju* pulsates weakly, then that person will become weak. If he does not take food and drink he will die, for all the other functions of the body will stop.

Diagnosis

128 10.14. The preceding few chapters have presented an excursion into the ethnomedicine of the Badagas, as described to me by some